

December 29th, 2019

# The Peace of an Experimental Christian

Psalm 119:161-168

## What is an Experimental Christian?

What is an Experimental Christian? In John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian and his friend Faithful come across a fellow traveler called Talkative. Now Talkative's talk sounded no different than a true believer. He could talk about the vanity of earthly things and the benefit of things that are above. In fact, after listening for a while, Faithful told Christian "What a brave companion have we got! This man will make a very excellent pilgrim."<sup>1</sup> But Christian knew who Talkative truly was. He was a man who was clean on the outside of the cup, but on the inside, he was full of greed and self-indulgence. (**Matthew 23:25**). And Christian reminded his friend Faithful that "...the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power" (**1 Corinthians 4:20**).

Christian and Faithful had experienced the power of the new birth. They had true sorrow over their sin, and true delight in Christ, but Talkative had neither. He only spoke of them. That is the difference between an experimental Christian and one that is a Christian in name only. An experimental Christian *experiences* Christ in his inner man, as Paul said "the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (**Galatians 2:20**). But a Christian in name only is like those Israelites of old who could honor God with their lips but their hearts were far from Him (**Isaiah 29:13**). And the difference between these two couldn't be greater. It is not those who merely have a profession of Christ who will see the Kingdom of God, it is those who have been born from above (**John 3:3**).

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<sup>1</sup> John Bunyan, *The Works of John Bunyan Vol. 3*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2009), pg. 121

### **The orbit of the Christian galaxy**

What Psalm 119 has been doing for us, is showing us the characteristics of those who have been truly born again. Born again Christians are as different from everyone else as a corpse is from a living body. Today's passage put's that on full display. Our key verse is **v.165** "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble." Now my main focus will be just here. The other seven verses are orbiting around **v.165** like the planets of our solar system orbit around the sun. The reason the Psalmist acts and reacts in these other verses as he does, is because he has this *great peace*. Just as the gravity of the sun keeps the planets in orbit, so this *great peace* of the Christian is what keeps his heart orbiting close to God and His Christ.

### **The primary business of the gospel**

Dear congregation, the primary business of the gospel is peace.<sup>2</sup> Peace with God. Reconciliation to God. This is the primary thing. The gospel is not mainly concerned with your temporal needs. It is primarily concerned with your everlasting soul. You can be sure that any other teaching whose primary aim is not to help you for the coming Day of Judgment is a lie. The most significant day of your existence is not when you were born, not when you got married or bought your first house, or landed your dream job, or retired. The most significant day of your existence is when you will stand before the Lord of all things. Have you considered that day? Have you seriously considered your last day on planet earth. Whether you will be on your bed drawing in your last breath, or whether you will be lying on the street somewhere after a terrible accident. What will your feelings and thoughts be then? Will you be afraid of death? Will you be afraid of judgment?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5 - Assurance*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2017), pg. 10

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, pg. 21

## The Great Peace of an Experimental Christian

Oh dear saint, the Psalmist here offers such help for that day! He says for those who have this *great peace*—this peace between a sinner and a holy God—*then* nothing can make them stumble. Why? Because this *great peace* is the very peace that Christ gives freely to all His people.

It is a peace that can mock death *itself*. “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” (1 **Corinthians 15:55**).

It is a peace that turns your death into the most glorious day of your life. **2 Corinthians 2:9** “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

It is a peace that renders all the accusations of the devil and the gates of hell powerless against you. **Romans 8:31** “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

It is a peace that frees you from all the curses found in the law. **Romans 8:33** “Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.”

It is a peace that can give you confidence when all the world is on fire. **Psalms 46:1-2** “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea.”

This is indeed a *great peace*. A peace, with which, nothing can make you stumble. That is what the Psalmist is going to show us today.

### *The Big Idea...*

The Christian possesses a peace—a great peace—such that nothing can make him stumble

- ☆What Is This Peace?
- ☆How Does One Gain This Peace?
- ☆Why Is This Peace a Great Peace?

## I. What Is This Peace?

### What this peace is not...

Let's start first by saying what this peace is *not*. This "great peace" that the Psalmist speaks of in **v.165** is not an *external* peace or a *physical* peace or the peace that comes from one's circumstances. That's clear from looking at **v.161** "Princes persecute me without cause." The Psalmist is *not* experiencing outward peace—the opposite is true—he's being persecuted by the state. And this is the first thing that is so perplexing to the watching world. A Christian can have great peace though he may be put into desperate circumstances. When Daniel was thrown into the lion's den, it wasn't Daniel who was filled with anxiety, it was the pagan king Darius. He paced to and fro in his luxurious bed chamber and Scripture says that "sleep fled from him" (**Daniel 6:18**). Daniel slept with the lions, and had peace. So outward circumstances have nothing to do with this great peace that the Psalmist is speaking about.

Neither is this great peace something that is all people possess. Those who have not been born again have never tasted this peace. **Isaiah 57:21** says "'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.'" What a contrast between the Apostle Paul and the Governor Felix in **Acts 24:25**. Paul was the prisoner, Felix the judge. Paul on trial for his life. Felix secure in the Roman hierarchy. Yet it was Felix who had no peace. We read "...as [Paul] reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was *alarmed* and said, "Go away..." Unbelievers know nothing about true peace. They live in fear. **Proverbs 28:1** "The wicked flee when no one pursues..." The non-Christian does not know what true peace is.

### **Shalom: safety *from* God**

What then is the peace the Psalmist speaks of in v.165? The Hebrew word is Shalom. It means completeness, soundness, safety. Safety from what? Well not from circumstances, we've already seen that. What do we need safety *from*? From God. This peace necessarily involves the relationship between two people. "In this case it is peace between man and God."<sup>4</sup> You see, this is the first concern of the gospel is to make peace between God and man. Why? Because God is angry at sinners.

**Psalm 5:4-5** "For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; *you hate all evildoers.*"

**Psalm 7:11** "God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day."

**Psalm 11:5** "...his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence."

That is the first reason why man needs peace or safety. Because God is angry with him.

### **Humanity at enmity with God**

But it's not just God who is angry with sinners. Sinners are angry at God, and, in fact, they hate God. By nature, every single one of us is at bitter enmity with God. Many of us simply don't realize this. It's because we naturally formulate a god according to our own imagination. I was just talking to a young man over the Christmas break who believed that God exists and on that basis thought he was ok. But when I told him that what God requires is not to simply admit that He exists, but to love and worship Him, then his enmity towards God came to the surface. He didn't like the idea of a God who would make demands

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, pg. 14

on his life. He showed his hatred of this God. And that is the state of all humanity as they come into this world.

**Romans 8:7** says “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God...”

**Ephesians 2:3** says that by nature we are all “children of wrath.”

**Romans 5:5** calls the man outside of Christ an enemy of God

This is what the first three chapters of the book of Romans labors and labors to demonstrate: because of sin, that there is no peace between God and man. Whenever a man or a woman is brought into the world, they are at enmity with God. Sin has ruined man for God.

### **The Prince’s Poison Cup**

Boys and girls, perhaps some of you have this wonderful little book at home called “The Prince’s Poison Cup.”<sup>5</sup> It’s about about a great King who had a people that loved him. He built this beautiful park for them, and at the center of the park was a fountain. He told them they could drink from any of the streams in the park, but they couldn’t drink from the fountain because it would harm them. What do you think happened? An enemy came while the King was away and tempted the people to drink from the fountain. And as they did their hearts were turned to stone and they no longer loved their King. They no longer wanted to spend time with Him, and they moved away to a city far away from him called the City of Man. The King was angry. The people were full of hate. There was no peace.

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<sup>5</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Prince’s Poison Cup*, (Orlando, FL,: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008)

## II. How Does One Gain This Peace?

Well we must realize that in order to gain this peace, something must happen on God's side *and* something must happen on our side.<sup>6</sup>

### What must happen on God's side?

First, let's consider what must happen on God's side. God is angry with sin. How is that anger appeased? How is God's anger against your sin satisfied? You may think this is a easy problem, but this is *the* problem of the Bible. "How can God at one and the same time forgive a sinner and yet remain just and righteous [at] the same?"<sup>7</sup> I think most people think forgiveness is an easy thing for God. But no, they have it all wrong. If God simply puts away sin, if He *merely* forgives sin, then He is unrighteous. Just think about the scandal that happened in Jerusalem around the turn of the 1st century b.c. Nathan the prophet came to David after he had murdered Urriah, and said "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die" (2 Samuel 11:13). Imagine you are Urriah's parents. Imagine hearing that verdict. David would not be imprisoned. David would not be put to death. Instead David would remain king. The LORD decreed forgiveness. What would you think? 'God is unrighteous. My boy was murdered and God simply forgave the perpetrator. That is unrighteous.' You would be correct if that were all the facts. God would be unrighteous if He *merely* forgave sin.

But He doesn't *merely* forgive sin, He makes satisfaction for it. The reason why God could put away David's sin, is because He transferred it to the true and better David: the LORD Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ stood up in the courtroom of Heaven and said "Here I am! Send me."<sup>8</sup> And God sent Him! **Romans 3:25** says that "God put forward [Christ] as a *propitiation* [a wrath

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<sup>6</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5 - Assurance*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2017), pg. 14

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, pg. 15

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 6:8

satisfier]...This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.” He had passed over David’s sin. But He didn’t forget about it. He punished Jesus for it. And Jesus willingly bore the punishment for it.<sup>9</sup> Jesus Christ is the reason why God can forgive sinners and still remain righteous. So that’s what happened on God’s side. That’s how God has made peace with sinners.

### **The Prince’s Poison Cup**

Boys and girls, remember where we left in the story with the King and His people? How did the King respond? Well even though the King was angry He still loved His people. So He sent His Son, the Prince, to the City of Man, and in the center of the city was another fountain. It was a fountain of poison. “The poison was made up of the King’s anger over his people’s disobedience.”<sup>10</sup> If the Prince were to drink a cupful of that poison, it would heal the King’s people. It would cost the Prince His life, but it was save His people. That’s exactly what Jesus did for His people.

### **What must happen on our side?**

What must happen on our side? What must we do to have peace with God? **Romans 5:1** “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” There it is! In order to have peace with God we must be justified by faith. The shorter catechism (Q.33) tells us what justification is: “Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John 10:18

<sup>10</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Prince’s Poison Cup*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), pg. 16

<sup>11</sup> WSC Q.33



## The three types of inadequate faith<sup>12</sup>

The vital thing for us to understand is what saving faith is. Saving faith is not three things. **First** saving faith is not *mere* agreement to facts about Jesus Christ. Theologians call this type of faith *historical faith*. This is the type of faith that demons possess. In **Mark 1:24**, one demon confessed that Jesus was the “holy one of God.”

**Second**, saving faith is not the receiving or even the working of miracles. Theologians call this type of faith *miraculous faith*. Judas Iscariot had a faith that he worked miracles with (**Luke 10**).<sup>13</sup> The Apostle Paul said “...if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (**1 Corinthians 13:2**).

**Third**, saving faith is not merely the agreement of facts *and* the temporary stirring up of the emotions. Theologians call this type of faith a *temporary faith*. You can see this type of faith in the parable of the seeds. One type of seed fell on rocky ground, and Jesus said “this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away” (**Matthew 13:21**).

## Saving faith

Saving faith is of an entirely different nature than these. Saving faith is “an act of the entire rational soul.”<sup>14</sup> It is an act of *the intellect* in which you agree that Jesus Christ is the One promised by God the Father without whom there is no hope of salvation at all. **Acts 4:12** “...there is salvation in no one else, for

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<sup>12</sup> Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology Vol. 2: Faith in the Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), pg. 6; cf. Wilhemus A. Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service, Vol. 2: The Church and Salvation*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 1993), pg. 263ff

<sup>13</sup> He and the other disciples healed the sick (Luke 10:9) and the demons were subject to them (Luke 10:17).

<sup>14</sup> Petrus Van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology Vol. 2: Faith in the Triune God*, (Grand Rapids, MI.,: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019), pg. 6

there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Saving faith is also an act of *the will* in which you willingly consent and receive Christ as He offers Himself to you “in the way that a bride receives a bridegroom”<sup>15</sup> (**Hosea 2:19**) or the way a hungry man receives food (**John 6:35**) or the way a thirsty man receives drink (**John 7:37**).

Lastly saving faith is an act of *the heart*. **Romans 10:10** “*For with the heart one believes and is justified.*” Saving faith fundamentally alters the heart’s affections such that the heart now loves Jesus Christ and is opposed to anything that belittles Him or obscures His love. The Christian can say in his heart of hearts along with the Psalmist “Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you” (**Psalm 73:25**).

### **The greatest change a man can undergo.**

That’s why Jonathan Edwards was keen on saying that conversion is the greatest change than a man can undergo in this world. Why? Because to possess saving faith means that you have been united to Christ. Christ lives in and through the believer. **Galatians 2:20** “It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” That is how man finds peace with God. By being united to Christ by a living faith.

### **The Prince’s Poison Cup**

Boys and girls do you know what happened after the Prince died from drinking the poison? The Great King came and raised Him back to life. And then the poison fountain was instantly transformed into beautiful, clear, sweet water. And the Prince went to the fountain and filled the cup up and said “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.”<sup>16</sup> And everyone who came and drank were instantly healed of their hard stony hearts. And as a result, they loved the Great King and His Prince. And they returned to the city with great

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, pg. 9

<sup>16</sup> R.C. Sproul, *The Prince’s Poison Cup*, (Orlando, FL.: Reformation Trust Publishing, 2008), pg. 32

joy. They were utterly transformed. That's what saving faith does. It transforms you.

### **Fides viva**<sup>17</sup>

Dear congregation, you can see this transformation, this *living faith* in the Psalmist. Every verse in this passage is not how a person earns this great peace that we have been talking about, it is what a person who has this great peace looks like. Look again at our verse. **v.165** “Great peace have those who love your law.” Stop. Think carefully about what he’s saying here. Notice he doesn’t say “Great peace have those *who perfectly keep your law.*” If that were the case, no human being could ever have peace.<sup>18</sup> No he says “Great peace have those *who love your law.*” The Psalmist is *not* giving the condition to gain this peace. He’s describing the person who already has this peace. Who is that? The one who trusts in Jesus Christ. Look at **v.166**, he says “I hope for your salvation, O Lord.” That is the condition for peace. Trusting in what Jesus Christ has done. Looking to Him alone for salvation.

That’s our **second point**: we gain this peace by receiving Jesus Christ by faith alone.

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<sup>17</sup>“The only kind of faith that saves is what Luther called a *fides viva*—a living faith, a vital faith, a faith that issues forth in works as the fruit of faith. Those works don’t count toward justification—only the merit of Christ counts toward that—but without the flowing forth of the fruit of faith, there would be no truth faith in the first place.” R.C. Sproul, *Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics*, (Wheaton, IL,: Crossway, 2003), pg. 22

<sup>18</sup> “What a charming verse this is! It does not deal with people who perfectly keep the law, for where would such people be found? Rather it deals with those who love it.” Charles Spurgeon, *The Golden Alphabet: An Exposition of Psalm 119*, (USA,: Aneko Press, 2018), pg.254

### III. Why Is This Peace a Great Peace?

#### **This peace transforms the soul**

The first reason why this peace is a great peace is because it utterly transforms you.

The Psalmist's great peace is what leads him to **fear** God more than man. **v.161** "Princes persecute me without cause, *but* my heart stands in awe of your words."

His great peace is what leads him to **rejoice** over God's Word. **v.162** "I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil."

His great peace is what leads him to **hate** lies and falsehood. **v.163** "I hate and abhor falsehood, but I love your law."

His great peace is what leads him to **praise** God. **v.164** "Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules."

His great peace is what leads him to **obey**. **v.167** "My soul keeps your testimonies; I love them exceedingly."

Dear Christian, why are you different from the rest of the unbelieving world? Because you have been given this *great peace*. Jesus said it is unlike anything the world has. He said in **John 14:27** "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you." This peace is vastly different from anything the world has or can experience. It's transformative. Paul says it is a peace which surpasses all understanding, and that it guards your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (**Phil. 4:7**).

## Nothing can make them stumble

But there is a second reason why this peace is a great peace. Please look again at v.165 “Great peace have those who love your law, nothing can make them stumble.” This great peace means that nothing can make you stumble. To stumble simply means to fall. In the Hebrew it’s a noun, so it’s not something that one does (verb), rather it’s a state or a condition. So how is the Psalmist using it here? What does he mean by saying that if you have this great peace, nothing can make you stumble?

## What he doesn’t mean...

Let’s start with what he doesn’t mean. **First**, when he says *nothing can make them stumble*, he doesn’t mean that you will never backslide or fall into grievous sins. The very night when Jesus told His disciples “My peace I give to you,” Peter went out and denied the Lord three times. It was a grievous sin, and Peter knew it by the bitter tears he wept. When the Psalmist says *nothing can make them stumble* he doesn’t mean that you can’t backslide or fall into grievous sins. The Bible is full of saints who possessed this great peace—this peace which prevents you from stumbling—who sinned greatly after they received it.

**Secondly**, when he says *nothing can make them stumble*, He doesn’t mean that you will never have seasons of doubt. Is this gospel really true? The devil will use that question and accuse you with it. “If you were a real Christian, you would never ask that.” But that is not true. The Bible is full of doubters. Abraham and Sarah doubted God’s promise to them that they would have the child of promise. They both laughed at the Lord (**Genesis 17:17-22, 18:10-15**). Thomas doubted the most fundamental tenet of the gospel—the resurrection of Christ (**John 20:27**). Scripture is full of true believers who possessed this great peace—this peace that prevents you from stumbling—who had great doubts about the promises of God.

**Third**, when he says *nothing can make them stumble*, He doesn't mean that you will not have to endure severe trials.<sup>19</sup> The Apostle Paul after serving the church for nearly his entire adult life, ended his existence on planet earth rotting in a Roman prison. And everyone had abandoned him. He wrote to Timothy saying "At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me" (**2 Timothy 4:16**). All of the apostles, save John, were murdered for their faith in Christ. How many of our brothers and sisters are in prison today, forgotten, abandoned, left destitute, simply because they trust in Christ. Yet none of this is evidence of stumbling.

**Fourth**, when he says *nothing can make them stumble*, He doesn't mean that you will be out of reach of the devil. Having this great peace does not mean that you will be free of Satanic attack. In fact the opposite is true. It seems that those who know this peace of Christ the best are those who are most severely abused by the devil. Paul tells us in **2 Corinthians 12:7** that a messenger of Satan was sent to torment him. You see this same type of demonic harassment throughout the book of Acts and in his letters to the churches. And yet this is not at all what it means to stumble.

### What he does mean...

So then what does he mean? If you have this great peace, what does he mean by saying *nothing can make you stumble*? He means that you can never, ever, fall away from this great peace that Jesus has purchased with His own blood. You cannot fail in your justification. "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (**Romans 5:1**). "God has pronounced us to be just once and forever. You cannot be just one day and not just the next, then again just the day after. That is impossible."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> "So Christ's true disciples, though in the world they have tribulation, yet in God have peace." Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 91

<sup>20</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5 - Assurance*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2017), pg. 22

You cannot fall because of any sin you commit. “If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous” (1 **John 2:1**).

You cannot fall because of any doubt you may have. “If we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself” (2 **Timothy 2:13**).

You cannot fall because of the many trials you will face. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all” (**Psalms 34:19**).

You cannot fall because of the attacks of Satan. Jesus told Peter “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith will not fail”<sup>21</sup> (**Luke 22:31-32**)

Dear congregation, this is why this peace is a great peace. Because it is omnipotent, invincible, eternal, and unchangeable. Jesus Christ has given you a peace—not as the world gives—but as God Himself gives, without regret, without uncertainty, without ever having to change His mind. This is a great peace.

## Application

### 1. What kind of a world do we live in?

We live in a world that has no peace. Dear friend, if you are here this morning and you don’t have this great peace that we have been speaking of, just consider: what would become of you if you were to die before the year ended? Would your accomplishments, or your money, or your relationships bring you peace when your soul is naked before God? Don’t you realize that “as long as

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<sup>21</sup> v.32 is from the Good News Translation

you continue to reject those offers and invitations of Christ, and continue in a Christless condition, you never will enjoy any true peace or comfort?"<sup>22</sup> The very wrath of God abides on you. You live in the most miserable state a man can live in. Don't you realize your danger? You are at war with the God who made the Heavens and the Earth. Do you think He will allow you a pass on the day of judgment after you have spent your life ignoring His love and mercy and grace? No. But then it will be too late.

Listen this morning you are being invited to a better portion. Jesus "... Christ gives peace to the most sinful and miserable people that come to him."<sup>23</sup> You can have all your sins forgiven—the greatest sins, the sins that no one else would forgive, the sins that others would be ashamed to call you their friend if they only knew. Jesus is the friend of sinners. And He invites you to trust Him this morning. Listen to the call that He has been making to sinners just like you for thousands of years: "'Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters...why do you spend your money for that which is not bread...incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant..." (Isaiah 55:1-3) The gospel promise is so plain and so clear. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

## 2. What kind of a Word has God given us?

God has given us a Word that will renew and increase our peace. I have spent the entire message talking about this great peace. This peace with God is objective—it is a matter of our judicial relationship with Him—we have been given His righteousness, we have been legally adopted into His family, and this cannot change. But there is a subjective peace, and this can change. Our feelings are real things. Some of you get nervous when I talk about feelings, and perhaps your quick to say "Yes but our feeling can lie to us." Well of course they

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 92

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*



can. The question is, what do you do when your feelings about your relationship with God are lying to you? What do you do? Where do you run? To the Word of God. It is amazing what the Psalmist says about God's Word in this short section.

**v.161** "My heart stands in awe of *your words*."

**v.162** "I rejoice at *your word*, like one who finds great spoil."

**v.163** "...I love *your law*."

**v.164** "Seven times a day I praise you for *your righteous rules*."

**v.167** "...I love *them* exceedingly"

Why this love affair with the Word? Because it is from the Word where He renews and increases His peace. **Isaiah 26:3** "You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you, because he trusts in you." Dear weary saint, does your peace with God feel paper thin? Go to the Word. How can you strengthen your sense of peace if you don't go to the Word? That would be like a hungry man trying to satiate his hunger by refusing to eat. Or a thirsty man trying to quench his thirst by refusing to drink. These is not an empty word to you, it is your very life. It is in the Living Word where you meet the Incarnate Word.

### **3. What kind of Savior do we need?**<sup>24</sup>

We need a Savior whose promises of peace aren't dependent on anything in us. Often times a Christian's peace can be robbed because they are looking at the fruits of their faith instead of the object of their faith. In other words, you try to find peace by looking at what Jesus has produced in you instead of looking to Jesus Himself. But that's all wrong. I'm not saying there's not a time for self-examination. But we cannot derive this great peace from the fruit of our faith, we must go to the root.

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<sup>24</sup> With the exception of the question on the Word, the other three are from Christopher Ash, *Job: The Wisdom of the Cross, Preaching the Word Series*, (Wheaton, IL.,: Crossway, 2014), pg. 17-23

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, meaning I don't look to even my best days, my most holy thoughts, my hottest affections. That is not where you find peace. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

Dear saint, don't you realize this about yourself? You are not any less secure in Christ than you will be 1,000 ages from now in glory. Colossians 2:10 says "You are complete in him." Don't you realize that the very moment you trusted your soul to Jesus, you are trusting in "a work so finished and complete, that all the difficulties of salvation on the part of God are removed."<sup>25</sup> "As far as God is concerned the wrath is no longer there, and He is a peace with all that believe in Jesus."<sup>26</sup> Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.

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<sup>25</sup> Charles Bridges, *An Exposition of Psalm 119*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2002), pg. 441

<sup>26</sup> D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5 - Assurance*, (Carlisle, PA.: The Banner of Truth Trust, Reprint 2017), pg. 15